

room were unlocked during the day and a telephone was installed in the operator's office, ready for use. The small station was quite comfortable for the day²¹. The end of line was to be located roughly between present day 106 and 109 Streets and 104 and 107 Avenues.

A new survey began which would run the line from another junction (Terminal Junction) roughly one mile south of the Strathcona Station. The Bulletin reported that Superintendent Pace had a "a gang of men at work this morning laying out the site for a building at the junction of the spur line with the C&E (Calgary and Edmonton) below Strathcona. This building will be about 20 feet square with platforms. The size of the platforms has not been stated yet. The telegraph wire on the C&E line will be tapped at this point and an office arranged and operator kept in the building. A ticket office and small waiting room will also be provided. The telegraph line will be run into the Edmonton, and an operator kept at this end of the spur"²².



The proposed line would then cross 99th St and follow east along 68th Ave. This area is now known as the Greenway and extends right beside Hazeldean School. In this plan the rails would run east to the Mill Creek Ravine and proceed down the ravine at a 1% grade. In 1901, Malcolm McCrimmon won the contract to grade the rail bed. He hired 70 to 80 men to build the rail line down the 1% grade into the ravine. McCrimmon could not start until the following spring and lost most of his workers to other jobs, mostly in agriculture, which paid better and were not

as difficult as rail work. The rail bed crossed from the west side to the east side of the ravine depending on the stability of the banks. It continued to 76th St. where the original Mill Creek Bridge was located. He used mules and draught horses to pull graders, scrapers and wagons to grade the line. But around Vogel's Abattoir (meat butchering plant located in the ravine just north of the Mill Creek Bridge on Whyte Ave) problems arose. Many difficulties delayed creation of the rail bed including a structure too close to the surveyed rail line, heavy clays which needed to be blasted through, and rains that made the



ground so wet and unstable that sections of the rail bed slumped into the ravine at least three different times²⁴. By the early summer they ran low on money and had to start digging with the cheapest means possible. This meant they dug the bed and laid tracks by hand. The CNoR built the trestles in the ravine themselves, as the bids were all too high. It had also been a very wet June in 1902 and not enough culverts had been put in place so no

trains could be run that month. The railway got its water on the banks of the ravine from a spring somewhere near a house by Vogel's Abattoir. The rail line got its coal from the north riverbank beneath where the MacDonald Hotel stands. This hand-dug coal however was not good enough for industrial use. This coal was high in ash and water, which is more suitable for heating houses. Eventually coal suitable for steam engines had to be shipped in from Rocky Mountain House²⁵. All rail lines were affected.

Mackenzie and Mann incorporated their business with both the EY&PR and CNoR as subsidiaries of their larger company. Mackenzie and Mann then demanded that the CPR operate the short rail line (EY&P) as they had earlier negotiated. But, the CPR told the two businessmen that they no longer would fulfill their agreement.

Mackenzie and Mann asked the federal government to rule on the disagreement. The CPR appealed the judgment against them. Mackenzie and Mann retaliated by building the railway to within feet of the CPR line. The CPR officials were more than frustrated with Mackenzie and Mann's actions. A CPR official was heard saying, "no rail will ever go to Edmonton"²⁶. The federal judge finally ordered the connection between the lines to be completed. On Oct 8, 1902 Railway Superintendent W. J. Pace led the crew to the site at 68th Ave. A CPR crew followed them with a constable to stop the connection. When Pace ordered the workers to continue, the Strathcona constable showed a warrant to stop all work. When this was happening, a CPR train came from the Strathcona station and intentionally stopped on the connection spot. Yells and threats from Edmontonian Teamsters who would lose their jobs of unloading freight in Strathcona and moving it to Edmonton, could not convince the CPR to move the train so the connection could be completed. Most Edmontonians eventually went home. The regular 5:30 C&E train arrived at the station forcing the CPR train to move. Mr. Pace and his men had been waiting for this chance and jumped out of the bushes. Within half an hour they had completed their mission to connect the lines²⁷.



On Oct 20, 1902 the first train, Engine #26 arrived in Strathcona from Winnipeg over the CPR and the C&E rail tracks. It came pulling a second-class passenger coach and a boxcar and 2 flat cars. It arrived at 4 pm with engineer J.E. Enwistle and fireman N.Bohm. On Friday there was a civic holiday and on wednesday, citizens could ride the "first train" to cross the Saskatchewan River. Many jumped on board, while others were in seats fitted on top of the flat car for the occasion.

But even before the train crossed JJ Duggan (the first mayor of Strathcona) and other dignitaries came across on an old hand pumped car. At dusk they had their small revenge by being the first over the bridge on the rails! Eventually, four trains per day were crossing the bridge at a cost of .25 a ride²⁸. On the north side of the bridge passengers would disembark at the Ross Station located at the base of McDougall Hill. Railway historian, Alan Vanterpool, listed reasons why Rosedale Flats was the centre of Edmonton activity at the time: "the

exhibition grounds, power house, lots of businesses, ice houses, coal mines, flour mill and lumber yard, and this is where the Indians camped. The first hotel, Ross's hotel, was the



only hotel between Winnipeg and Victoria. People would get off the station and walk over to Ross's hotel for a drink or relax."²⁹.

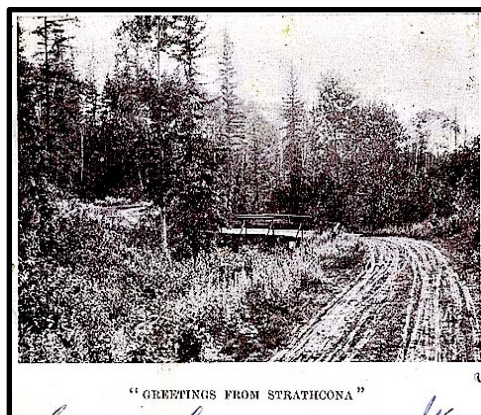
Many Cree, who camped on Rossdale flats, had never seen an engine or a train, much less ever ridden in one. "Twelve men, however, were persuaded to ride the train. They were bundled into a boxcar, and hurried back and forth across the river. It was an epoch for them. Their Chief could not be induced to follow their example" He was quoted as saying "What man does what the Gods do", he felt reasonably justified in refusing to tangle himself in the intricacies of

their magic³⁰.

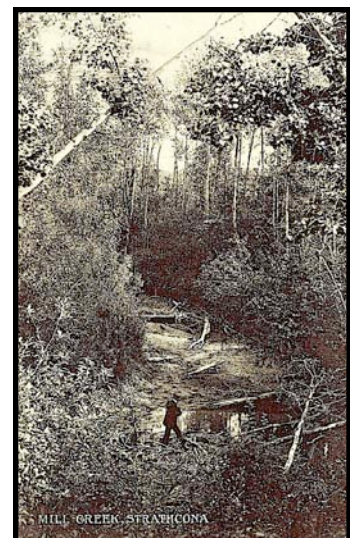
Through the Mill Creek Ravine and across the bridge, the train's journey was bumpy and shaky until an improved rail bed allowed the train to glide swiftly and smoothly along the rails³¹. Well, swiftly, perhaps not! Carolyn and Butch Nutter mentioned that their neighbour who worked for the downtown post office would jump on the very slow moving ravine train with all of his bags. Mr. Cross, who lived in my house, was also a postman and probably met this other man every morning on the way to work³².

In mid winter 1903, Tom Williams, came from Calgary to Strathcona and transferred to the EY&P for the 2 mile trip down Mill Creek Ravine and across the North Saskatchewan. His trip ended at Ross station, and young Tom struggled up to McDougall Hill to Jasper Ave. He became one of the first homesteaders in Clyde (45 miles north of Edmonton). Mr. Williams later admitted that the trip was "anything but impressive, but the "abbreviated railway with it sights on the Yukon caught his fancy"³³.

Perhaps our perception of the beauty of wilderness has changed over time, but in 1903 the ravine was just another treed area. In our era imagine coming into Strathcona on the relatively barren plain and then entering into the Mill Creek Ravine for the final leg to Edmonton. Keith Davidson in a more modern statement said, "this was by far the most picturesque exit/entry route that Edmonton has had to this day"³⁴. I would have to agree with him.



Mackenzie and Mann began to branch out to develop railroads and real estate in other areas of Alberta. This was the "Golden Years" of railway construction on the prairies. Railway owners who held titles to land lots had very profitable years from sales to settlers who were too late to grab free land in the United



States and had come up to Canada. Land sales provided the CPR with money to expand their railway lines. Between 1905 and 1916 the CPR alone constructed 900 miles of “branch rail-lines” in northern and central Alberta³⁵.

In 1905 the EY&P was used to send lumber across the bridge to Ross’s Flat to build the CNoR rail line between Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, as well as build other structures such as the High Level Bridge, the Provincial Legislature and assorted commercial and residential buildings in downtown Edmonton. The CNoR finished its connection to Edmonton from Winnipeg, and was working on other lines. Intending to go out to Stony Plain the CNoR line was ordered to stop because the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway acquired the charter to build from that point on to the Yellowhead Pass. The CNoR was furious because they had held the charter first³⁶.

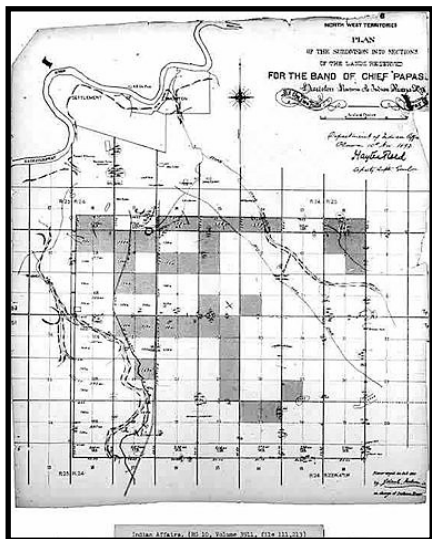


The EY&P was not without its accidents. The ravine walls were not stable and had to be in good repair. Mr. Bishop recalls that one of the trains going through Mill Creek ravine was delayed by a spruce tree that fell on the tracks in front of a trestle. It had to be lifted before the train could continue on its assignment to pick up loads of dirt for railroad repairs³⁷.

On Sept 12, 1910 a 25-car-south-bound train derailed at the north end of the Low Level Bridge. The train had come to a complete stop, but the 5th car derailed off of a “frog”, or railway switch, where

street car line crossed the rail track. Two cars derailed and almost piled into the girder. Apparently, the defective “frog” was installed by the Edmonton streetcar railway crew. The EY&P claimed no fault. Two years later six cars left the tracks near by the Twin City Coal Mine at the north end of the Mill Creek ravine. The cars were loaded with cement and coal.

Papaschase Land	Chief Papaschase
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The train was too heavy and the soil too soft. As a result fifty yards of track were torn up as the right of way sank³⁸.

Around this time the government began to create reserves. Chief Papastayo negotiated a reserve for his Papaschase Cree band in south Edmonton. The chief was also known in the Fort Edmonton area by an English name, John Gladu Quinn. In 1880, a federal surveyor calculated that the 241 members were entitled to 124 km², which was eventually reduced to 64 km². On January 13, 1881, a crowd of settlers demanded that the

Papaschase band be moved 20 miles south of the river. They sent two petitions to prime minister John A. Macdonald advising against any Cree reserves close to "a great central point" like Edmonton. Settlers began to build cabins and cut timber on the Papaschase claim.³⁹

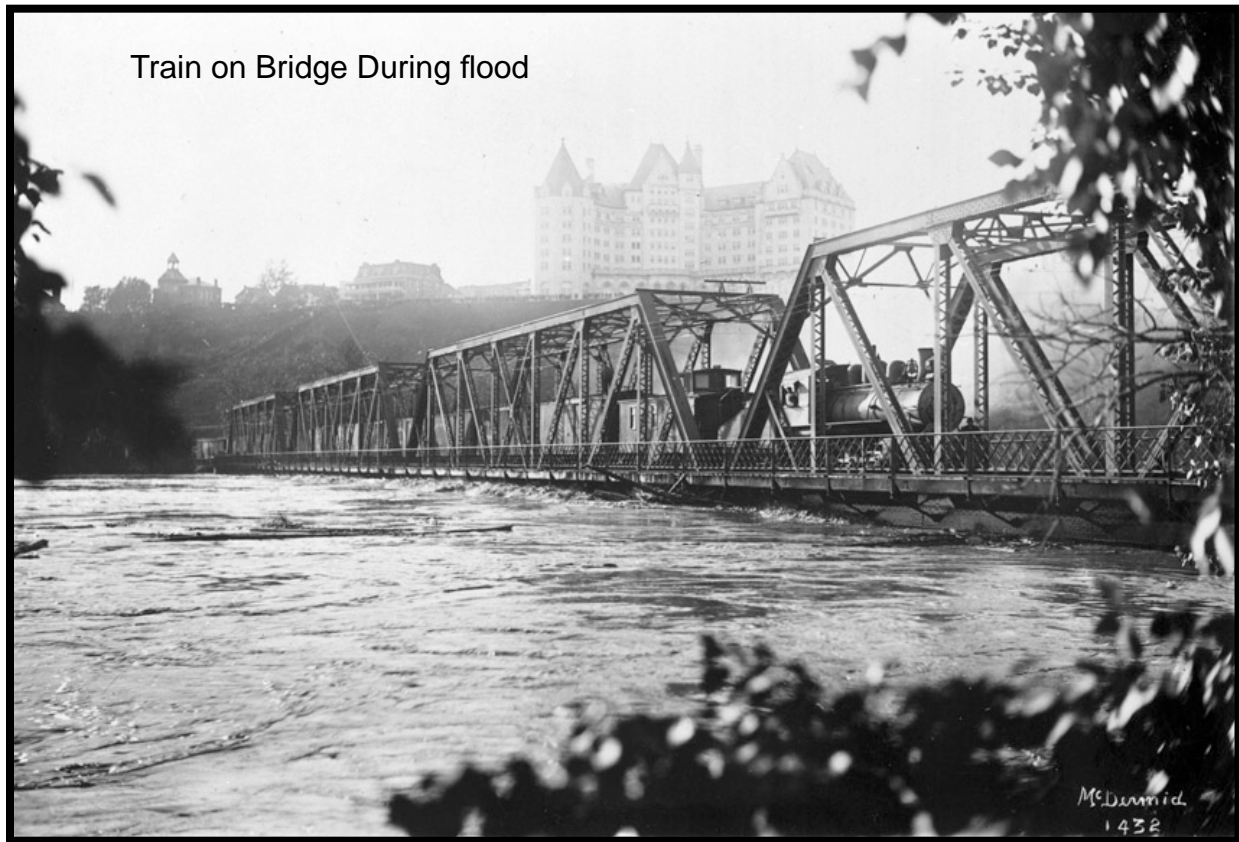
In 1907 land that was previously the Papaschase Reserve was annexed to Strathcona, subdivided in 1910, and made into Richmond Park and Hazeldean. Hazeldean was likely named after two indigenous species of hazelnut trees, the American and the Beaked, that grow in the area. The second half of the name 'dean' refers to vale or valley and, so the landscape was identified with a valley of hazelnuts.⁴⁰ Although the hazelnuts are hard to find, newcomers, such as Colin Korchinski and Bailey Dutka⁴¹ love the old trees that make them feel as if they are living both inside and outside of the city. They also like the history of their street, which is inter-generational, and that only three houses have changed hands since they were built. The ravine and people who homesteaded in the Hazeldean area created a community of like-minded people. Not a place people want to move from. Preston Sorenson and Kyla Ferby⁴² had the same thoughts about the neighbourhood and settled into a small 1940 house with the large backyard. Another neighbour, Mary⁴³ remembers the children playing outside near the tracks. They would often try to "tight rope" walk along the rails. It was very safe as by this time no trains ran anymore. She also noted the sounds of all of the birds, the partridges and the grouse. Unlike today there were few magpies. But, she also remembers the woodpeckers. Interestingly the large Piliated Woodpecker is indigenous to the Mill Creek Ravine. The government staked out for the Papaschase Band a reserve in this area, but only a short time later the reserve boundaries were pushed south to 51st Ave.

The Papaschase were tricked during Treaty #6 negotiations and eventually lost all their lands. The reserve was dismantled and the band members sent away to the Paul and the Enoch Reserves. Yet, in the ravine one can still hear woodpeckers, which ironically is the meaning of Papaschase⁴⁴.

The network of rail lines in Edmonton was complex and competitive. The Grand Trunk and the CNoR were losing profits and so the government bailed them out by purchasing shares in the companies. The government felt that if the railways became bankrupt that the country would suffer a financial collapse that would rival the 1929 crash. Mackenzie and Mann were forced to give back a significant amount of railway. Ultimately, the Grand Trunk Railway and the CNoR also became assets of the government, merged and renamed as the CNR⁴⁵.

The CNR absorbed many of the area rail lines, declared many of the lines redundant thereby reducing the network considerably. For example, the Stony Plain line was abandoned in 1926, with only 1.89 miles at the east end of the track at 127 Ave and 15th St kept for storage track⁴⁶. The CNR developed better tracks than the smaller individual lines. They developed a track over the Low Level Bridge with a grade half as steep that had no load restrictions. Also, the CNR's stronger engines helped increase tonnage by over 2%. An additional reason for the decline in the EY&P was the Great Flood of June 1915, which was even higher than the famous flood of 1889. This flood came within inches of covering the Low Level Bridge. The flood carried away trees and dead animals, houses and barn structures and businesses in its surge. All the debris was heading toward the Low Level Bridge. To prevent the bridge from being dislodged, the Edmonton authorities drove loaded freight trains onto the bridge. One train faced south and the other north. In case the bridge

gave way each train could try to reach the shore. On June 28th, the water was rising at 1ft per hour, on the next day it was decreasing by 1 ft per hour. Although the bridge survived, the flood wiped out most of the major industries on the flats such as the power plant,



Walter's north lumber mill, coal mines, ice companies, abattoirs, leaving many people both homeless and without money to start again⁴⁷.

In the mid-1920s the EY&P proved to be uneconomical to operate, but the city was legally bound by a CNoR agreement to move people from Edmonton to Strathcona. In 1927 the City of Edmonton let them bow out of the obligation and by 1929 passenger service to Strathcona ceased and the station closed. At this point the EY&P was taken over by the CNR. The EY&P moved cars slowly through the city and people were, people were able to grasp the handrails of the boxcars and ride on the train. In an interview, Vanterpool recounts that, "There was a retired judge, Judge Matheson, who as a boy used to deliver newspapers to houses that were just above and along the banks of the Victoria golf course. Matheson rode the freight train in both directions to deliver the papers"⁴⁸.



In 1929, the EY&P only ran freight cars. Two trains crossed the Low Level Bridge during the day, and four more trains ran between midnight and 4 A.M. The bridge was often clogged with debris, such as sand, salt and pebble dirt. This made it difficult for rail movement and increased maintenance costs significantly. At this time flagmen were used to let different forms of vehicles know if they could cross or not. Jim Daymond was one of those flagmen and he recounted that: "I can remember one day this guy gave me the finger and drove right by me. He got down all the way to the other end of the bridge and then had to back up. The engine was just belching steam and smoke and he was scared spittleless. He didn't do that again"⁴⁹.

Edmonton twinned the bridge for north and south bound vehicular traffic with a new bridge almost identical to the original Low Level Bridge. Other bridges were also being built, but with flooding in mind. The Walterdale Bridge over 105th street was 3 feet higher and then 18 inches higher at each end than the Low Level Bridge. Finally a 1950 transportation study recommended that the EY&P tracks be removed. This was not a huge

surprise as the industrial area of the Rossdale flats had moved higher up to Edmonton proper⁵⁰.

As a final salute to the EY&P, on June 11th 1952, the RCAF 700 Wing Association organized "Operations Pioneer Excursion" to raise money



Kids Playing Down in the Ravine (1920s)

for scholarships. These scholarships would assist students to go to the College at Royal Roads in B.C.. On that day over 1120 passengers rode on the 10 car train. The train left the downtown CN station at 7pm and returned at 11:15 pm. Entertainment on each car was noted and a dance was held at the South Edmonton CN station. "It was quite a colourful party. Many turned out in early nineteenth century suits and dresses, and this was prior to the establishment of Klondike days"⁵¹.

The fate of the EY&P was sealed in April 29 1954 as the Lieutenant Governor J.J. Bowlen pulled the first spike to remove the rail line on the North Side, eliminating 23 level crossings and 9.2 miles of track. Of the 3.2 miles of track at the north end of Mill Creek

ravine, which had opened in 1908, all but .06 miles at the EY&P junction was abandoned. As well 4.5 miles of track laid across the bridge to the top of the grade in Strathcona was removed. All that was left was a 2.7-mile spur that went from Terminal Junction down 68th St., through the ravine and up to Gainer's Meat Packing Plant. This track was used until 1958⁵².



Many Hazeldean residents still remember the train going through on the spur to the Gainer's plant. It did not matter that the train went no further. The fact that

there was some rail activity and excitement during the day made the train an essential part of the memory of the place. Marg and Sieg Hark have lived along the ravine for all of their married life. They told me that when their daughter Heather was four or five years old she would hear the whistles of the train coming and ride her bike through the honeysuckle and lilac bushes to wave at the train conductors. It was a very “important” part of her day⁵³.

In the early 1900s, a photo of Vernon Barford’s twin boys watching the train come up the hill, waving as the train went by reminds me of Heather and her fascination with the train. Children from different places and times all enjoy the sight and sound of the train. Even as adults the emotions connected with trains continue to be felt. Jean Watson used to sit on the front porch of her house and watch the train go by. She remembers the last train that went through. She was pregnant at the time with their first child, and reminisced about how emotional she was about the end of an era. I guess she was thinking of her child who would no longer hear the train’s whistle and clunking of the rails.⁵⁴ The clunking of rails, however, was not necessarily an attractive element. George Tutton lived so close to the tracks that when the EY&P would go by his house the walls and windows would shake. George never had any “fancy” porcelain or dishes and so he did not worry about anything breaking. He was more interested with his garden and generally ignored the shaking. He mentioned that some of his neighbours, though were often bothered.⁵⁵

Mr. Cowgill recalls the modern bridge over Mill Creek. “The new Mill Creek Bridge was constructed since World War II. The old bridge angled off about a 100 yards to the south of where the new one stands. The new bridge straightened Whyte Avenue. It was made primarily of cement whereas the other was mostly metal with cement pilings and it, also, was without an arching top.” He recounts that the new bridge withstood the shaking of the ground by the trains, than the older version⁵⁶.

The E.Y.&P. was important to many people in Strathcona and Edmonton as it offered jobs or kept companies operating. Without the trains the residents of the Edmonton area would have been severely deprived economically. Although the E.Y.& P. carried a geographically ambitious name, it never got far beyond Edmonton's boundaries, much less up to the Yukon or the shores of the Pacific. Even though other lines joined it, the E.Y.& P. still kept its record length of the shortest rail line in Canada. The historic path of the EY&P came to an end. It had served to connect two very competitive communities in 1902, to arrive at the old Molson’s Brewery by 1906, and by 1907 extended out to Stony Plain and Spruce Grove (a 90 minute ride). The EY&P had been important to move people, but even more so to deliver freight for the following industries.⁵⁷

1. Gainer’s Meat Packing Plant
2. Vogel’s Abattoir
3. Twin City Coal Mine
4. Anderson’s Brickyard
5. City Abattoir
6. Edmonton Lumber Company
7. Edmonton City Dairy
8. Arctic Ice Company
9. Edmonton Ice Company
10. John Walter’s North Lumber Mill
11. Dowling Flour Mill